

## Workshop

# State regulation of Islam and violent radicalisation in the MENA region

**31 May 2022**

Sala Belvedere and Seminar room Mansarda - Villa Schifanoia, Via Boccaccio 121 - Florence

Scientific Organisers:

Dr Georges Fahmi | European University Institute

Dr Tine Gade | Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

## Introduction

Facing an increasingly fluid and violent religious sphere beginning in 2013, governments throughout the MENA region strengthened their control over official Islamic institutions. This nationalization of Islam, although not a new phenomenon itself, involved new regulations that sought to expand state authority in the religious sphere and to co-opt religious personnel. However, such a tight state control over religious institutions may be counterproductive, as it might cause religious actors to lose legitimacy, hence offering opportunities for radical voices to gain influence. Since 2014, the Ulama have found themselves facing a double challenge, from a radical religious competitor (Daesh), and from the regimes' attempts to assert control over religious institutions.

This workshop explores the renegotiation of state-religious relations between both political regimes and religious institutions with a focus on Sunni Islam in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Saudi Arabia since 2014. It seeks to answer a number of questions including: How do religious institutions respond to political attempts at nationalization of Islam, that is, efforts by the state to control them and their legitimacy before their followers? What factors determine how the Ulama — the Muslim clergy — balance political pressures and their congregation's expectations?

## **Programme**

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### **31 May**

09:30 - 16:30 09:30-10:00: **Welcome and presentation of the StateIslam Project-Tine Gade (NUPI)**

10:00-11:00: **How to study the dynamics within the religious field in the post 2011 MENA**

Moderator | Meriem El-Haitami (Columbia University)

Presenter | Georges Fahmi (EUI)

Discussant | Olivier Roy (EUI)

11:00-11:30: **coffee break**

11:30- 12:30: **Why do authoritarian regimes reform religious sphere: the case of Morocco**

Moderator | Tine Gade (NUPI)

Presenter | Mohammad Masbah (MIPA)

Discussant | Georges Fahmi (EUI)

12:30-14:00: **lunch break**

14:00-15:00: **Reforming Islam and religious diplomacy: the case of Saudi Arabia**

Moderator | Mohammad Masbah (MIPA)

Presenter | Tine Gade (NUPI)

Discussant | Patrick Haenni (EUI)

15:00- 16:00: **Women in a Man's Pulpit: Morocco's Religious Reform and the Fashioning of 'Securo-Feminism'**

Moderator | Georges Fahmi (EUI)

Presenter | Meriem El-Haitami (Columbia University)

Discussant | Heba Raouf (Ibn Haldun University)

16:00 16:15: **Coffee break**

16:15 -17:30 **Concluding remarks by Olivier Roy (EUI) , Heba Raouf (Ibn Haldun University), and Patrick Haenni (EUI).**

**20:00 Dinner**

### **Participants**

**Georges Fahmi:** Part-time Assistant Professor at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

**Heba Raouf:** Assistant Professor of Political Theory and Civilization Studies at Ibn Haldun-Istanbul University.

**Meriem El Haitami:** Visiting fellow at the Middle East institute, Columbia University.

**Mohammed Masbah:** Founder and President of the Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis (MIPA).

**Olivier Roy:** Part-time Professor at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

**Patrick Haenni:** Visiting Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

**Tine Gade:** Senior Research Fellow in The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) Research Group on Peace, Conflict and Development, and Visiting Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

